

Andrews University

## Digital Commons @ Andrews University

---

Memory, Meaning & Life

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

---

11-5-2010

### Augustine and the Nature of Divine Love

John Peckham

*Andrews University*, [jpeckham@andrews.edu](mailto:jpeckham@andrews.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/mml>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Peckham, John, "Augustine and the Nature of Divine Love" (2010). *Memory, Meaning & Life*. 68.  
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/mml/68>

This Blog Post is brought to you for free and open access by the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Memory, Meaning & Life by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact [repository@andrews.edu](mailto:repository@andrews.edu).

# Memory, Meaning & Faith

[Main](#)

[About](#)

[Archives](#)

November 05, 2010

## Augustine and the Nature of Divine Love

By John C. Peckham (Southwestern Adventist University, Religion Department)



Augustine is representative of the classic view of divine love as unaffected, unilateral, indifferent, and wholly subjective, beneficence. He writes, “In what way then does He [God] love us? As objects of use or as objects of enjoyment? If He enjoys us, He must be in need of good from us, and no sane man will say that; for all the good we enjoy is either Himself, or what comes from Himself . . . He does not enjoy us then, but makes use of us. For if He neither enjoys nor uses us, I am at a loss to discover in what way He can love us.” Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 1.31.34 (NPNF, 1109). For Augustine, “to enjoy a thing is to rest with satisfaction in it for its own sake. To use, on the other hand, is to employ whatever means are at one’s disposal to obtain what one desires . . .” *Augustine*, 1.4.4 (NPNF, 1090). Even in Augustine’s view of use love (*uti*) God does not love any external goodness, but only his own goodness. In God’s use of humans there is “no reference to His own advantage, but to ours only; and, so far as He is concerned, has reference only to His goodness.” *Augustine*, 1.32 (NPNF, 1109-1110). “But neither does He use after our fashion of using. For when we use objects, we do so with a view to the full enjoyment of the goodness of God. God, however, in His use of us, has reference to His own goodness.” *Augustine*, 1.32.35 (NPNF 2:1109).


### Questions

- Is God impassible, that is, unable to be affected by any external stimuli? Does God enter into real, mutual, relationship with human beings?
- Can God’s life be improved or, conversely, worsened, by the actions of other agents? Is it possible for God to take delight in, or enjoy, his creatures?
- What are the potential implications for one’s conception of God and the divine-human relationship if Augustine’s perspective is accurate?

Posted by [Angelika Kaiser](#) on November 05, 2010 in [Church History](#), [Historical Theology](#), [Quotable](#) | [Permalink](#)

[Save to del.icio.us](#) | 

## Comments

 You can follow this conversation by subscribing to the [comment feed](#) for this post.

## Verify your Comment

### Previewing your Comment

Posted by: |

This is only a preview. Your comment has not yet been posted.



Your comment could not be posted. Error type:

Your comment has been posted. [Post another comment](#)

The letters and numbers you entered did not match the image. Please try again.

As a final step before posting your comment, enter the letters and numbers you see in the image below. This prevents automated programs from posting comments.

Having trouble reading this image? [View an alternate.](#)



[Contact](#)

[Archives](#)

[Feeds](#)

[Powered by TypePad](#)

Copyright © 2010 Andrews University